MUT 1001
FUNDAMENTALS OF MUSIC

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UNIT 1
THE SCORE

MUSICAL PARAMETERS

In simple terms, a musical composition is a description of various parameters unfolding over time. The score is used by a composer to show how these parameters unfold in a way that can be understood and replicated by a performer. Some scores contain an enormous amount of information, while some contain very little. As we will see, the remaining details are provided by the interpreter based on their knowledge, experience, and skill.

So let's look at the basic parameters of a musical composition:

1) Pitch
2) Duration (rhythm)
3) Timbre (instrumentation, color)
4) Intensity (volume)

Additional elements may include the shape of a sound, details about how durations may be stretched (rubato), and the spatial location:

5) Envelope/Articulation
6) Rubato
7) Spatialization

THE SCORE

The score shown in Ex. 1, contains specific pitches and rhythms but not much more information. Other important elements such as tempo, dynamics, and articulations must be added by the performer (some are often suggested by an editor). The title “Courante” gives the performer important clues regarding the tempo and general style, but it still vague enough that there will be many possible “correct” interpretations. The *courante* is a dance of French origins that became one of the core movements of the baroque instrumental suite (a collection of dances in the same key). The French spelling suggests a moderate pace, unlike in the Italian *corrente*.

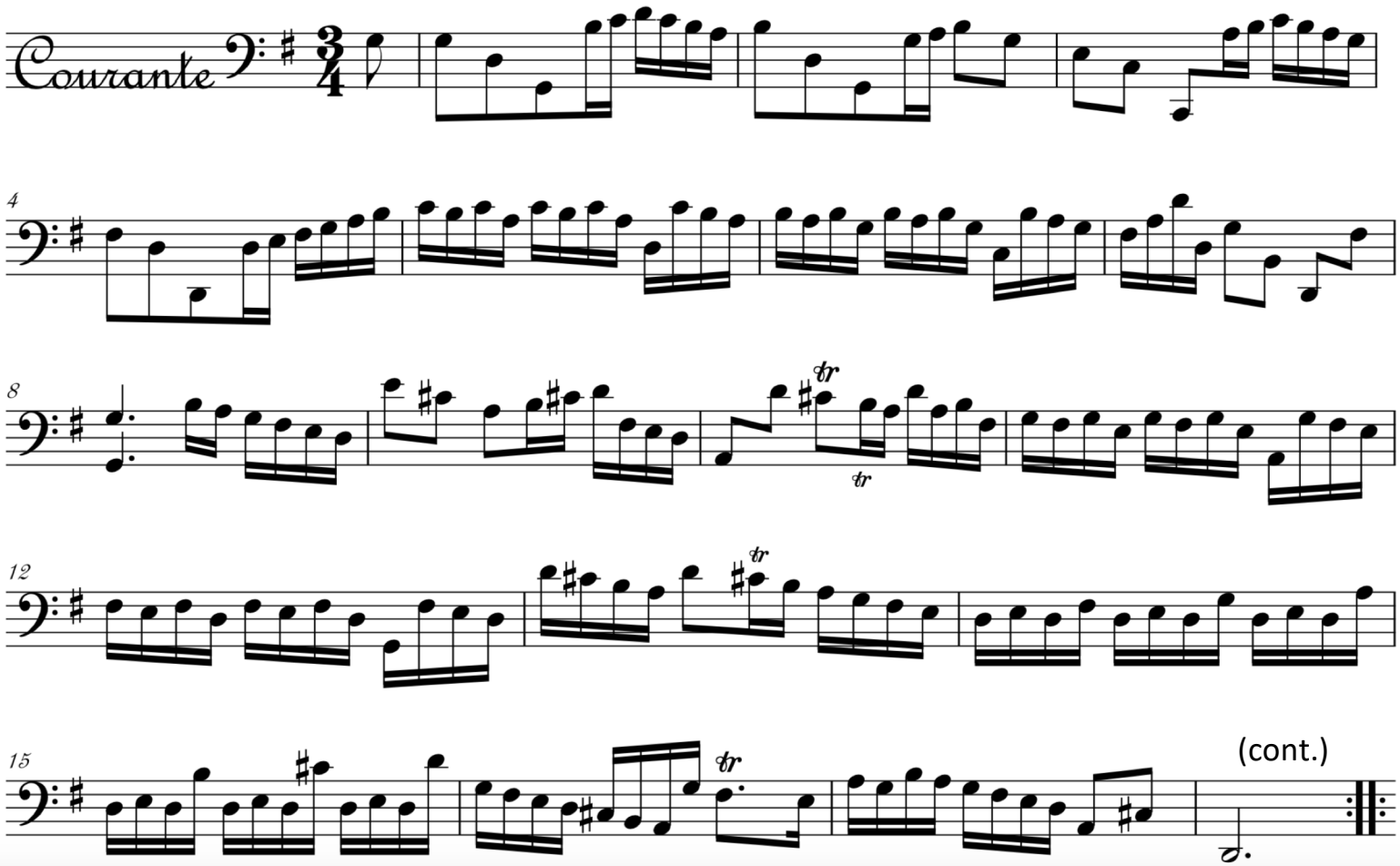
Because there are no sound recordings from the time of Bach (he died in 1750), we have no way of knowing for sure how the piece was played at the time, so each performer must make some educated guesses. The term “interpretation” is a general term used to describe the individual choices made by a performer regarding articulations, rubato, tempo, and ornamentation. There are infinite possibilities and this is the reason why no two performances of the same piece sound alike.

This piece is from J.S. Bach’s first cello suite, a famous piece by a famous composer, therefore performers will likely gather ideas about how to interpret this piece from their teachers as well as from listening to performances and recordings.

Ex. 1-1

Cello Suite No. 1
BWV 1007

J.S. Bach



AN OVERVIEW OF THE SCORE

Let's now look at the different elements that make up the score in Ex. 1-1.

The first page of a score will generally contain the following information:

- Composer
- Title
- Movement
- Opus/Catalog number
- Publisher info
- Instrument, this may be simply indicated in the title

The music itself will include the following elements:

- Staves
- Clefs
- Key signature
- Time signature
- Tempo marking (in some cases, the tempo is implied by the title, as in Ex. 1-1)
- Metronome marking. This is usually only indicated in relatively recent scores (the metronome was invented in 1814), but may sometimes be added by the editor.

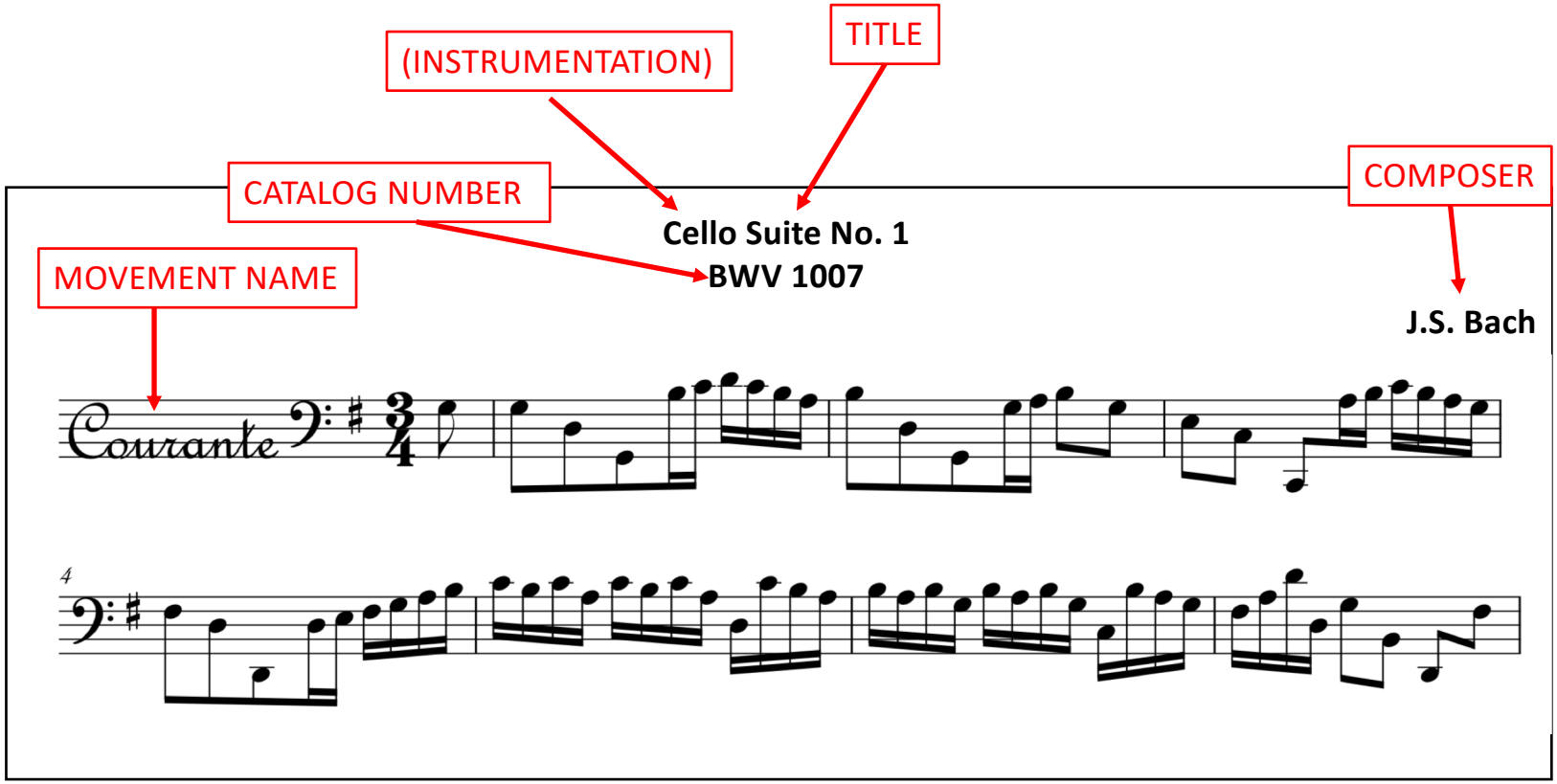
AN OVERVIEW OF THE SCORE

Lastly, we find the details of the piece:

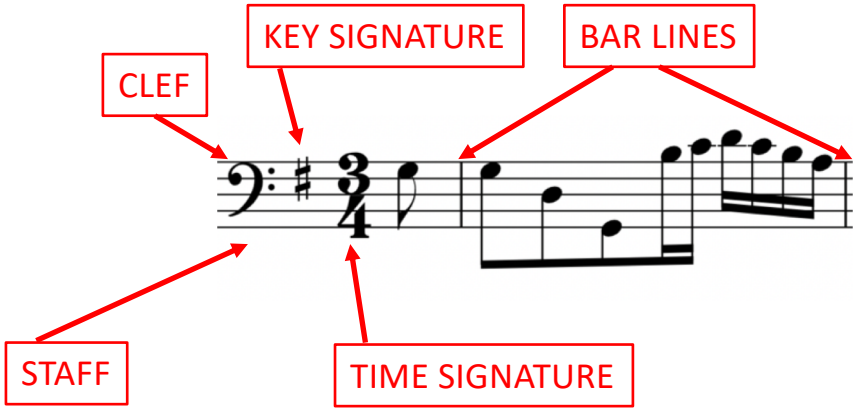
- Pitches
  Determined by the placement of **noteheads** (normally elliptical) on the staff
  Ledger lines are used to indicate pitches above or below the staff

- Durations
  Shown using various combinations of the following:
  Full or empty noteheads
  Beams
  Stems
  Flags
  Augmentation dots

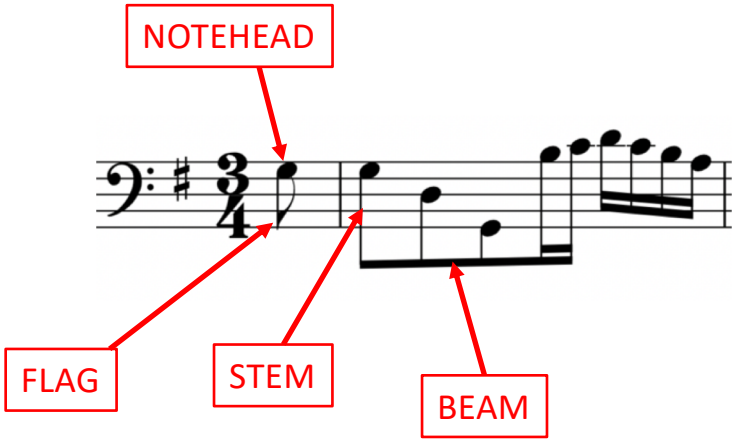
Ex. 1-2


(INSTRUMENTATION)
TITLE
CATALOG NUMBER
COMPOSER
Cello Suite No. 1
BWV 1007
MOVEMENT NAME
J.S. Bach
Courante
4

Ex. 1-3



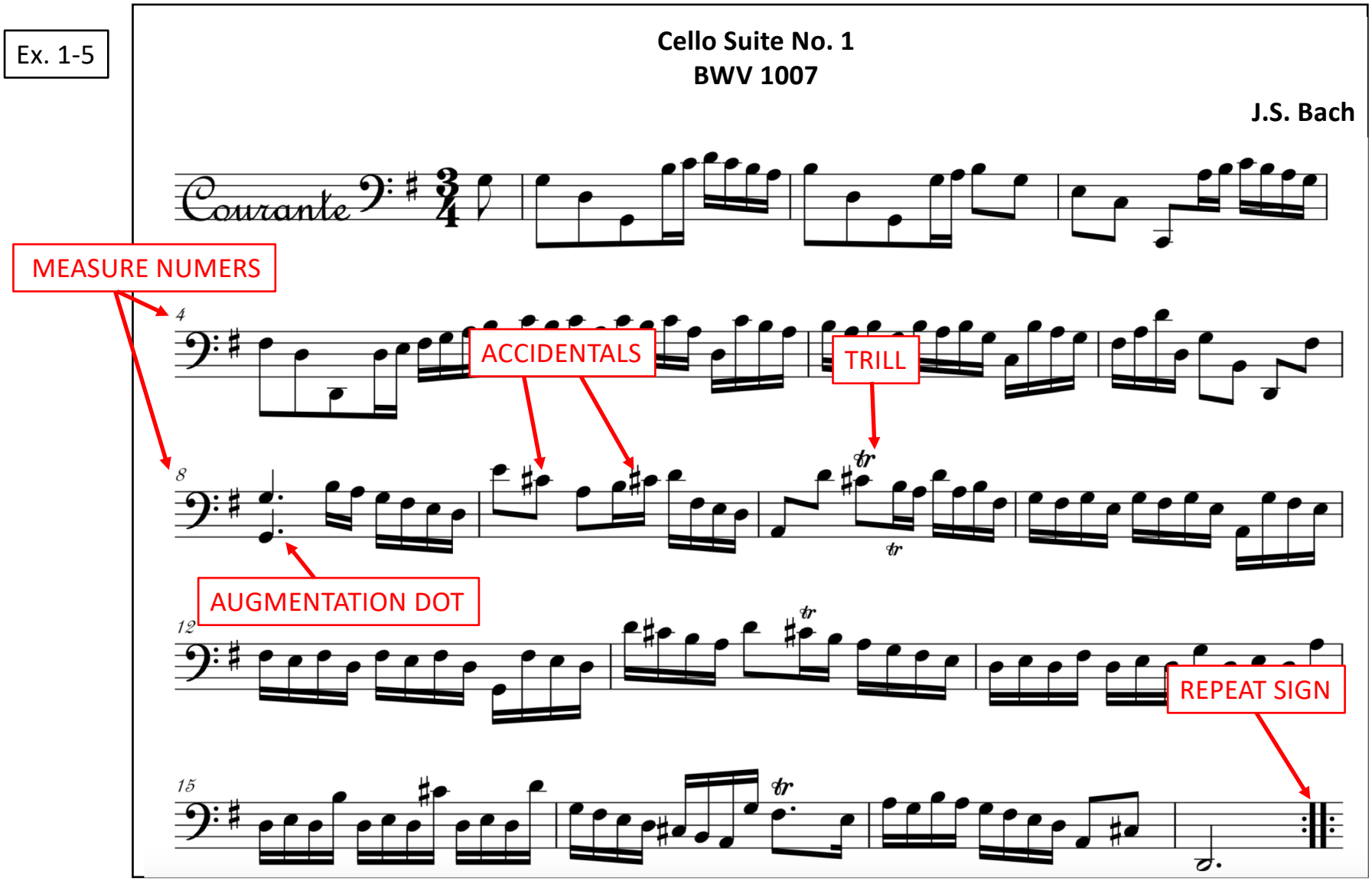
Ex. 1-4



Ex. 1-5

Cello Suite No. 1
BWV 1007

J.S. Bach



AN OVERVIEW OF THE SCORE

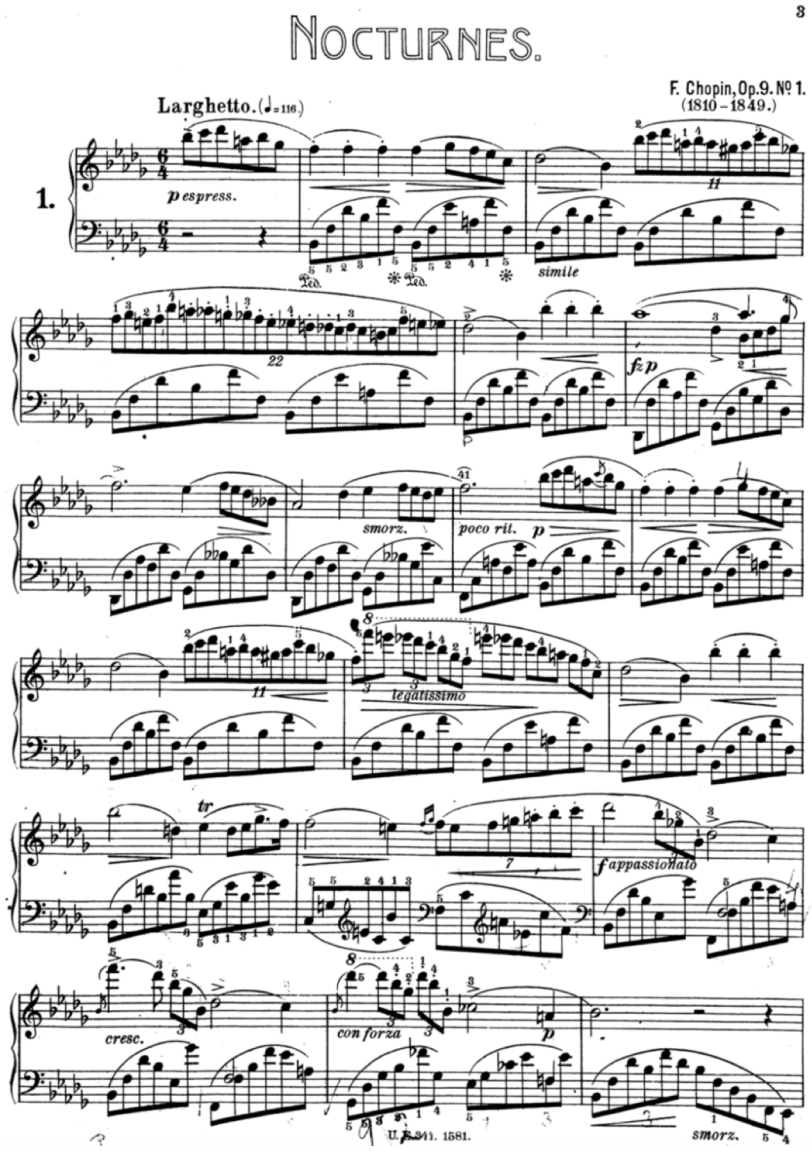
Terms to know (part 1)

Title
Instrumentation
Catalog/opus number
Movement name
Compose name
Key signature
Time signature
Bar lines
Staff/staves
Notehead
Flag
Stem
Beam
Measure numbers
Accidentals
Augmentation dot
Ornamentation symbols (trills, mordents, turns, etc.)
Repeat sign

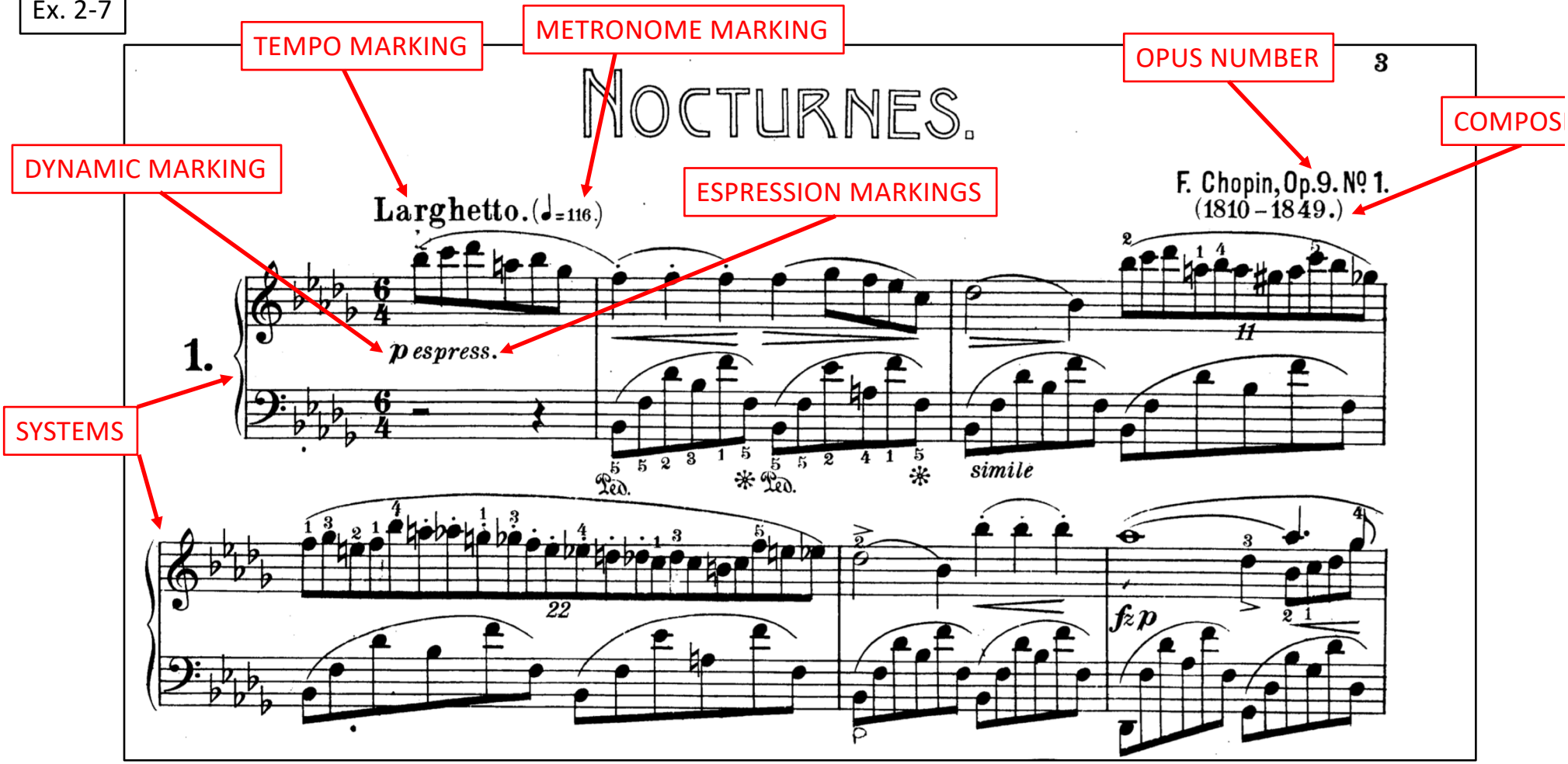
AN OVERVIEW OF THE SCORE

Ex. 1-6 contains several additional details. This practice became more and more common in the 19th century and even more so in the 20th. In contemporary music it is not uncommon to find an almost overwhelming amount of details.

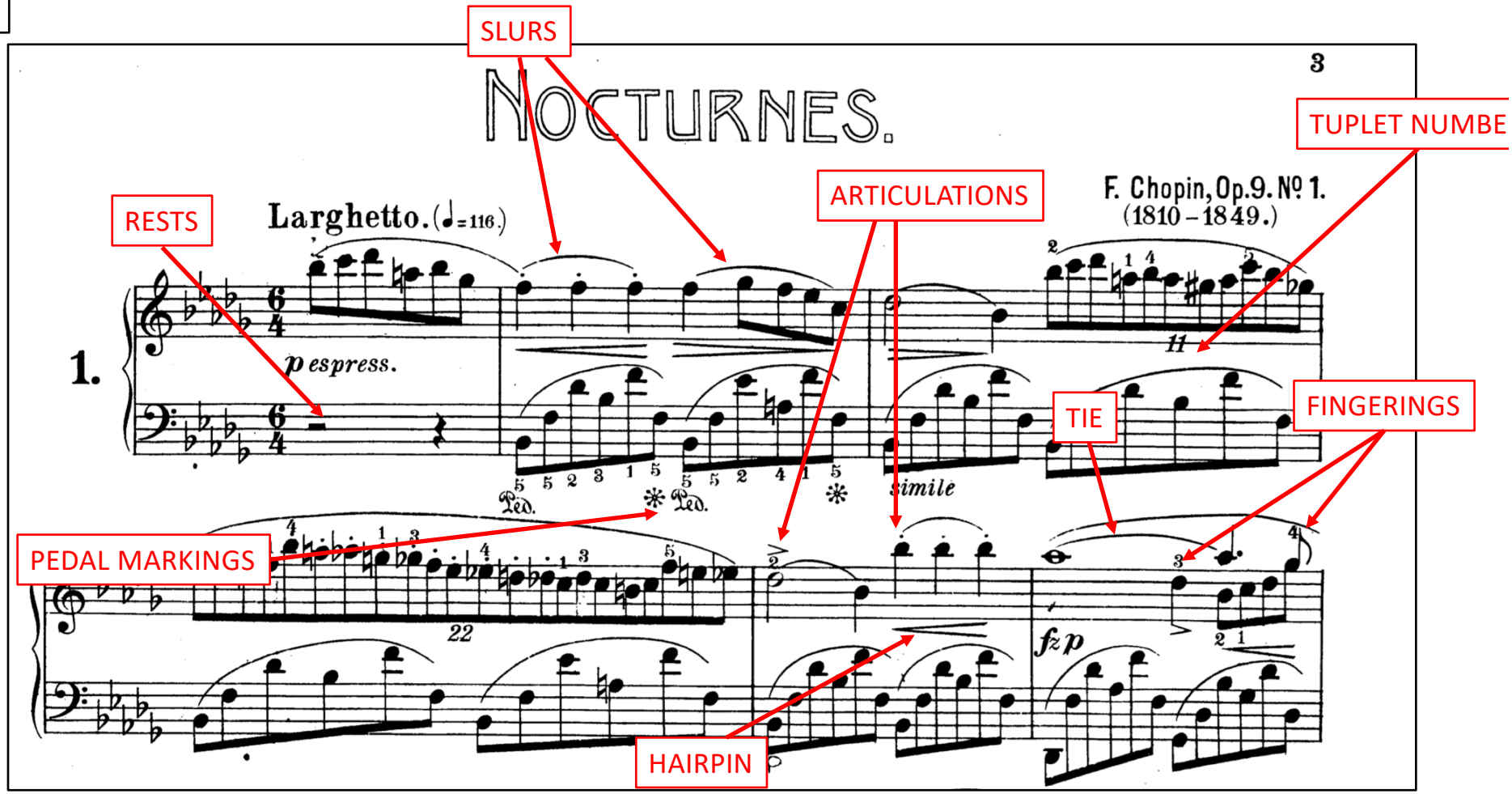
Ex. 2-6


3
NOCTURNES.
F. Chopin, Op. 9. № 1.
(1810 – 1849.)
Larghetto. (♩= 116.)
1.
p espress.
simile
fz p
smorz.
poco rit.
legatissimo
tr
f appassionato
cresc.
con forza
p
smorz.
U. S. M. 1581.

Ex. 2-7


TEMPO MARKING
METRONOME MARKING
OPUS NUMBER
COMPOS
DYNAMIC MARKING
ESPRESSION MARKINGS
SYSTEMS
NOCTURNES.
3
Larghetto. (♩=116.)
F. Chopin, Op.9. No 1.
(1810 – 1849.)
1.
p espress.
simile
fz p
Ped.
22
11

Ex. 2-8


SLURS
TUPLET NUMBE
ARTICULATIONS
RESTS
TIE
FINGERINGS
PEDAL MARKINGS
HAIRPIN
NOCTURNES.
3
Larghetto. (♩=116.)
F. Chopin, Op. 9. No 1.
(1810 – 1849.)
1.
p espress.
simile
fz p
Ped.
11
22

AN OVERVIEW OF THE SCORE

Terms to know (part 2)

Opus number
Composer dates
System
Tempo marking
Metronome marking
Dynamic markings
Expression markings
Rests
Tuplet number
Slurs
Articulations
Hairpins
Fingerings
Pedal markings

CLASS PRACTICE

Identify the following elements in the excerpt shown in Ex. 2-9

Title
Instrumentation
Catalog/opus number
Movement name
Compose name
Composer dates
Key signature
Time signature
Tempo marking
Metronome marking

CLASS PRACTICE

Now identify at least one example of each of the following:

Barline
Staff
Notehead
Flag
Stem
Beam
Measure number
Accidental
Augmentation dot
Ornamentation symbol (trills, mordents, turns, etc.)
Repeat sign
System

Dynamic marking
Expression marking
Rest
Tuplet number
Slur
Articulation
Hairpin
Fingering
Pedal marking

Ex. 2-9

MUT 1001 – CLASS PRACTICE 1

I. SONATE

mi mineur e moll e minor

Johannes Brahms, Op. 38

revidiert von Hugo Becker und Carl Friedberg

Allegro non troppo

Violoncell

p espress. legato

Piano

p (con Pedale)

p dolce

cresc.

(*p*)

p dolce

cresc.